

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Frequently Asked Questions on the Gasoline Changeover to Reformulated Gasoline (RFG) in the Baton Rouge Area

Q. What is reformulated gasoline (RFG)?

A. Reformulated gasoline is a gasoline that contains a chemical oxygen additive to reduce ozone-forming and air toxics emissions compared to conventional gasoline. Currently, the most common oxygenate additives used are ethanol, which is an alcohol, and Methyl Tertiary-Butyl Ether (MTBE), which is an ether. In the Baton Rouge area, it is expected that RFG with ethanol will primarily be sold.

Q. Where will RFG be sold and why?

A. The federal government is requiring the sale of RFG in the 5-parish Baton Rouge area (Ascension, East Baton Rouge, Iberville, Livingston, West Baton Rouge) since the area has been reclassified to "severe" ozone nonattainment. The reclassification from "serious" to "severe" is a result of the area's failure to meet the air quality standard for ozone by the 1999 deadline for "serious" areas in the Clean Air Act.

Q. When will the changeover from conventional gasoline to RFG go into effect?

A. The deadline for replacing current conventional gasoline supplies with RFG is June 23, 2004. Gas stations are expected to begin phasing in the supply of RFG prior to that date.

Q. Will there be sufficient supplies of RFG?

A. No supply issues are anticipated as the RFG is expected to be supplied from local sources.

Q. Will the cost of gasoline at the pump go up due to the changeover to RFG?

A. The impact on gasoline pricing is uncertain. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has estimated in general a cost increase of 3-7 cents per gallon for RFG over conventional gasoline. Knowledgeable sources in the Baton Rouge area estimate that the cost per gallon could range from 10-15 cents per gallon.

Q. Will there be a problem if my vehicle's gas tank still has some conventional gasoline in it when I go to fill it with RFG?

A. Based on available information, the commingling or mixing of RFG with conventional gasoline in a vehicle's gas tank will not present any problems.

Q. If I travel to a conventional gasoline area after the changeover to RFG and need to fill up my gas tank, will I experience any problems with my vehicle?

A. The mixing of RFG with conventional gasoline or the alternating use of these fuels in your vehicle should not create problems with your vehicle. RFG with ethanol as an oxygenate has been available and used by motorists in other parts of the country without any significant problems.

Q. Will RFG affect the performance of my vehicle or damage the engine?

A. According to the EPA, RFG will have no adverse effects on vehicle performance or the durability of engine and fuel system components. The use of RFG/ethanol in the Baton Rouge area is not expected to adversely impact vehicle performance.

Q. Will RFG affect my vehicle gas mileage?

- A. According to the EPA, gasolines containing an oxygenate such as RFG/ethanol reduce gas mileage by 1 to 3 percent. Gas mileage can also be affected by the type of engine and vehicle, driving habits, weather conditions and vehicle maintenance.

Q. Will RFG affect my vehicle warranties?

- A. Using RFG will not affect the manufacturer's general warranty or the emissions warranty. For information on warranty provisions, see your vehicle owner's manual or consult your local dealer.

Q. Will RFG affect my marine engine?

- A. Marine engine manufacturers have indicated that the use of RFG in marine engines is acceptable, although some offer special instructions if you use RFG. You should always check your owner's manual for any specific instructions or contact your local dealer. If a fuel containing ethanol is used under conditions where water contamination is likely to be a factor, precautions should be taken to avoid such contamination.

Q. Will RFG affect my other types of engines such as lawn and garden equipment?

- A. According to the EPA, various manufacturers of nonroad engines have indicated that using oxygenated fuels is acceptable, although some manufacturers offer special instructions when operating equipment on an oxygenated fuel such as RFG. There is a wide range of recommendations by manufacturers for the use of such fuels depending on the specific engine application. Consumers should follow the equipment manufacturers recommendations found in their owners manuals or consult with a servicing dealer.

For further information, go to <http://www.epa.gov/otaq/rfg.htm#Fact>.

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality is neither implementing nor enforcing this federal mandate.